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Mining Weblogs for Information

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Mining Weblogs - Outline

- What, exactly, is a blog?
- How blogs work (anatomy and theory)
- Tools for reading and gathering blog content
- LIS blogs and bloggers
- Blog resources

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Blog lexicon

- Blogger
- Blogging
- Blogosphere
- Blogroll
- Bloggies
- Bloggorhoea
- Moblogging
- Blog person, blog people

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Weblogs ➡ 'Blogs

- A web site that contains an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks provided by the writer (Merriam-Webster, 1999)
- A web page containing brief, chronologically arranged items of information (Peter Scott, Libdex)
- A log of the web (Meatball Wiki)

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Blog characteristics

- Frequent postings
- Brief entries
- Personality (sometimes)
- Informal or casual tone
- Immediate and intimate (no editors)

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Alternate definition

A blog is a species of interactive electronic diary by means of which the unpublishable, untrammelled by editors or the rules of grammar, can communicate their thoughts via the web.

Given the quality of the writing in the blogs I have seen, I doubt that many of the Blog People are in the habit of sustained reading of complex texts. It is entirely possible that their intellectual needs are met by an accumulation of random facts and paragraphs.

Michael Gorman, ALA president-elect
"Revenge of the Blog People!"
Library Journal, Feb. 15, 2005
<http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA502009>

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Blog impact

- 2002: Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott unseated
- 2003: Jayson Blair plagiarism scandal results in resignation of NY Times editors
- 2004: Swift boat controversy
- 2004: Rothergate

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The state of blogging

Pew / Internet Study, Jan. 2005
http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/144/report_display.asp

- Readership increased 58% in 2004
- 7% of Internet users are blogging (8 million Americans)
- 27% of Internet users read blogs (32 million Americans)
- 38% of Internet users know what a blog is (46 million Americans)

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Blog history

- 1993: Mosaic's What's New? Page
- 1997: Robot Wisdom Weblog
- 1998: Handful of blogs (23)
- 1999: Blogger launches "push-button publishing"; soon other free weblog-creation programs become widely available
- 2004: Year of the Blog
- 2005: 8.4 million blogs, a new one created every 5.8 seconds (15,000 a day)

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Blog anatomy

- Chronological arrangement
- Permalinks
- Archives
- Search engine
- Blogroll
- Authorship
- Comments (not always)

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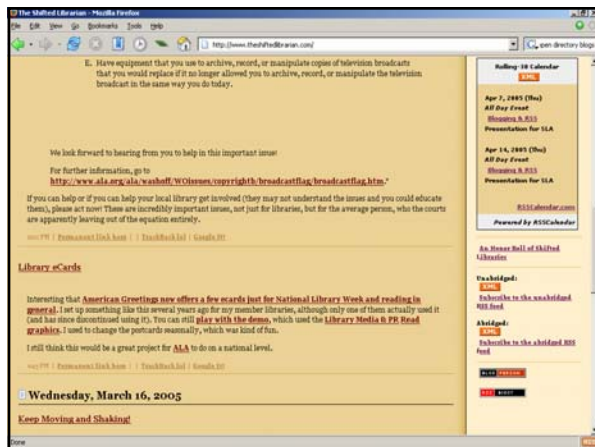
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Blog examples

- [It's all good](#)
Unofficial blog by OCLC staff
- [The Shifted Librarian](#)
Independent blog by Jenny Levine

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The screenshot shows a Blogger blog titled "It's all good". The post is dated "TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 2005". The content discusses the OCLC Online Computer Library Center staff's efforts to prevent and future-proof library services. It mentions a "Being Relevant" section and a "Why?" section. The blogroll lists "Globe Science", "Science", "Alice", and "Alice". The "PREVIOUS POSTS" section lists "Globe Science". The "Thank you, Waco!" section mentions "Boulder Technology, the senior editor of the Waco (Texas) Tribune Herald".



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Blog forms

- Personal
 - Online diaries
 - Family blogs
- Informational
 - News
 - Commentary and analysis
 - Annotated lists of Internet resources
 - Reviews of new products
 - Organizations: projects, news, information

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Library blogs

- Library sponsored
 - Marketing
 - Topical
 - Internal
 - Organizational (associations, consortia)
- Independent
 - Front-line
 - Innovator and commentator

Aaron Schmidt & Michael Stephens
<http://www.tametheweb.com/presentations/purdueblogs/TypesofLISWeblogs.pdf>

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Blogs as information tools

- New paradigms for information dissemination and information acquisition
- Alternative to mainstream press (e.g., warbloggers)
- Post news and information immediately
- Interactive (comments)
- Social network: interconnected blogosphere, collaborative efforts

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Blog theory: how blogs work

- Content stored in database
 - Can be distributed in various formats
 - Read on various platforms (web browsers, PDAs, mobile devices, aggregators)
- Content available via RSS or Atom feeds, which is a type of XML

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Blog theory: RSS

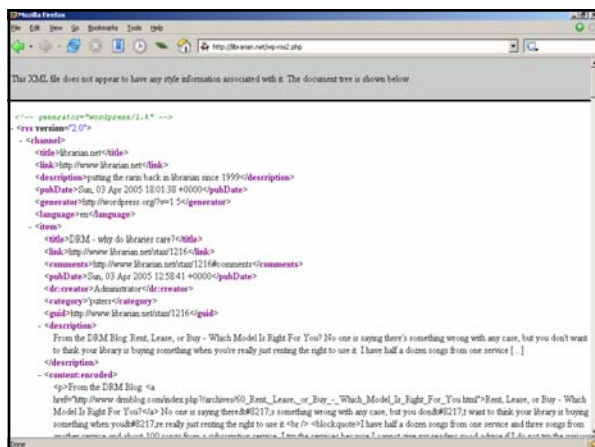
- Really Simple Syndication
- RSS feeds enable user to gather (aggregate) content in one place – no more checking multiple sites!
- Look for “syndicate this site” or

XML RSS RSS 2.0 ATOM FEED

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Gathering blog content: aggregators

- Online (web-based) aggregators
 - Bloglines
 - My Yahoo!
 - Newsreaders: Feedster, Newsgator
- Desktop aggregators
 - Plugins: Sage (Firefox), Pluck (Internet Explorer)
 - Stand alone: Amphetamine, Feed Demon, NetNewsWire (Mac)
- Find aggregators
<http://allrss.com/rssreaders.html>
- If you use more than one computer, get a web-based account

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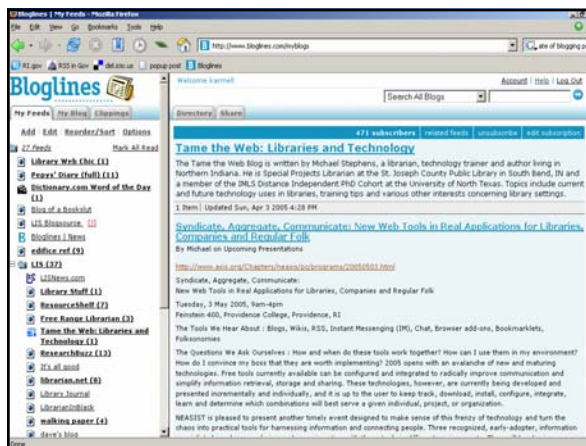
Bloglines

- <http://www.bloglines.com>
- Bloglines in 3-1/2 steps
 - <http://ioy.mollprojects.com/blog/projects/quickrss.html>
 - Quick set-up for librarians includes subscriptions to popular library feeds
- More detailed Bloglines tutorial
 - Getting Started with RSS
 - <http://frl.bluehighways.com/frlarchives/000123.html>

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Blogs and librarians

- Professional news
- Technology news and topics
- Current trends and hot topics
- Information resources
- Conference blogs
- Professional support

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Who's blogging?

- Published authors
- Practitioners
- Academics
- Movers and shakers
- Frontline staff

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Ten LIS Blogs

#1. Library Stuff

- Steven Cohen
 - Law librarian
 - PubSub Concepts
- Published by Information Today
- The library weblog dedicated to resources for keeping current and professional development.
- <http://www.librarystuff.net/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#2. The Shifted Librarian

- Jenny Levine
 - Internet Development Specialist
 - Suburban Library System, Burr Ridge, IL
 - Information technology evangelist
- Shifting Libraries at the speed of byte!
Goal: help librarians become as technologically adept as our users
- <http://www.theshiftedlibrarian.com/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#3. Tame the Web

- Michael Stephens
 - Special Projects Librarian, [St. Joseph County Public Library](#), South Bend, IN
- Current and future technology uses in libraries, training tips, staff development and various other topics concerning library settings
- <http://www.tametheweb.com/twblog/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#4. LIS News

- Blake Carver
 - Former Assistant Professor and Web Librarian, Ohio State University Libraries
 - Currently a special librarian, Buffalo, NY
- Collaborative weblog devoted to current events and news in the world of Library and Information Science.
- <http://lisnews.com/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#5. It's all good

- OCLC Online Computer Library Center Staff
- All things present and future that impact libraries and library users
- Conversation that starts with the Environmental Scan and wanders around from there. Content not vetted by OCLC.
- <http://scanblog.blogspot.com/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#6. Free Range Librarian

- Karen G. Schneider
 - Director, Librarians' Index to the Internet <http://lii.org>
 - Writer, librarian, speaker
 - ALA Councilmember-at-large
- Postcards from the edge of librarianship. (Blogging and ethics, intellectual freedom, technical issues, etc.)
- <http://freerangelibrarian.com/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#7. Librarian.net

- Jessamyn West
 - Library activist, speaker, writer
 - Vermont librarian, technology trainer
 - ALA Councilmember-at-large
- Putting the rar in librarian since 1999 - intersection of libraries, technology and politics
- <http://librarian.net/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#8. ResearchBuzz

- Tara Calishain
 - Author of *Google Hacks* and other books on Internet searching
- Items on search engines, online databases, and other information resources.
- Weekly email digest available
- <http://www.researchbuzz.com/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#9. Resource Shelf

- Gary Price
 - Former reference librarian
 - George Washington University
 - Information research consultant, writer, speaker
- Resources and news for information professionals
- Weekly email digest available
- <http://www.resourceshelf.com/>

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Ten LIS Blogs

#10. RSS Feeds: 2-for-1

- Librarians' Index to the Internet <http://lii.org>
- ALA Conference Blogs
PLA Blog <http://www.plablog.org/>

See Conference Blogs at
Unofficial wiki for the 2005 ALA Conference
<http://meredith.wolfwater.com/wiki/>

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More LIS blogs and feeds

- LISfeeds (aggregates content)
<http://lisfeeds.com/>
- LibDex: Library Weblogs (Peter Scott)
<http://www.libdex.com/weblogs.html>
- Open Directory Project: Library Weblogs
http://dmoz.org/Reference/Libraries/Library_and_Information_Science/Weblogs/
- Blogrolls on blogs you read

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Library blogs

Directories

- Blogging libraries
http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/?page_id=94
- RSS(sm): Rich site services
<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~CYBERSTACKS/RSS.htm>

Examples

- St. Joseph County Public Library
<http://lishost.org/~sjcpl/>
- Kansas City Public Library – subject guides
<http://www.kclibrary.org/rss/>

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Searching weblogs

- Blogdigger
<http://www.blogdigger.com/>
- Daypop
<http://www.daypop.com/>
- Feedster
<http://www.feedster.com/>
- NewsIsFree
<http://www.newsisfree.com/>

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Blogs as current awareness tools

- Technorati
what's happening on the web right now
<http://www.technorati.com/>
- Blogdex (MIT)
weblog diffusion index
<http://blogdex.net/>
- Blogrunner
<http://www.blogrunner.com>

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More mining tools

- LORI: Blogs, RSS and Data Syndication
<http://www.lori.ri.gov/webdesign/syndication/weblogs.php>
- What I'm reading (caveat lector)
<http://del.icio.us/kmellor/>
Today's links: presentBlogs2005
(also available as an rss feed!)

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Parting thoughts

- Blogs have a wealth of professional information
- Blogs can connect you with the broader LIS world and keep you current
- RSS brings content to you
- Aggregating information saves time and is more productive than browsing
- Start small and grow your collection; weed non-productive feeds
- Blogging facilitates knowledge sharing

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LORI Blog

- Rhodarian
<http://www.ori.ri.gov/blog/>
- Library news and information with a Rhode Island accent
- National library news and events, information, resources, blogs, etc.
- Stuff we don't put on LORI

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Questions? Comments?

Wanna get your own blog?

<http://www.blogger.com>

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